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RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN PRIORITY  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ASUNCION 000358

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

WHA/FO; WHA/BSC MDRUCKER, BFRIEDMAN, KBEAMER; NSC DFISK; DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/19/2028

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [PA](#) [XM](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT-ELECT FERNANDO LUGO: A PROFILE

REF: A. 06 ASUNCION 1280

[1](#)B. 06 ASUNCION 348

[1](#)C. ASUNCION 263

Classified By: DCM Michael J. Fitzpatrick; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d). -----

SUMMARY -----

[1](#)1. (S) President-elect Fernando Lugo will need to rely on his diverse background to govern Paraguay and hold together the varied interests in

----- POLITICAL ROOTS -----

[1](#)2. (C) President-elect Fernando Armindo Lugo Mendez will need his diverse background to govern Paraguay and hold together the varied interests

[1](#)3. (C) Lugo comes from a family of long-time Colorado dissidents, particularly vocal during the Stroessner years. He was born on May 30, 1951,

----- CAREER IN THE CHURCH -----

[1](#)4. (U) As a young man, Fernando Lugo finished first in his class during his obligatory military service. Yet Lugo was denied a military commission because of his family's opposition to Stroessner. Lugo then began his career as a teacher in 1969 but soon found his calling

[1](#)5. (C) The Church ordained Lugo as a bishop in 1994 and assigned him to the Archdiocese of San Pedro, one of the poorest areas in this poor cc

----- LEFTIST TIES? -----

[1](#)6. (S/NF) Sensitive reporting indicates that some members of Lugo's inner circle have ties to representatives of Venezuelan President Chavez.

[1](#)7. (S/NF) Sensitive reporting also suggests Lugo himself has loose ties to members of the Free Fatherland Party (PPL) -- the tiny Paraguayan P During the just-concluded presidential campaign, it was publicly alleged that Lugo assisted PPL members in planning and executing the 2004 kidn

[1](#)8. (S) NOTE: Lugo privately told DCM April 17 (i.e., several days before his election), that he was convinced that corrupt elements of the pol

Cuba's body was only recovered in February 2006, from the same house Lugo says they had identified to the Interior Minister in December. Lugo t

----- TRANSITION INTO FORMAL POLITICS -----

[1](#)9. (C) Lugo launched the organization Citizen Resistance in March 2006 and burst onto the national political scene as a last-minute speaker at

----- PERSONALITY AND OTHER BIO NOTES -----

[1](#)10. (C) While Lugo's quiet, affable style should help him build consensus in the next government, other aspects of his personality, such as hi

[1](#)11. (SBU) Given his career as a member of the Catholic clergy, Lugo is unmarried (although he is rumored to have fathered several illegitimate . (NOTE: Lugo was reading a Mandela biography at the time, which was on his coffee table during the meeting). Lugo speaks Spanish, Guarani, Por

----- COMMENT -----

[1](#)12. (C) Lugo leveraged his status with the Catholic Church and reputation for honesty to win the presidency, but he will need more than just a

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